



State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Secretary Randy Romanski

HPAI in Wisconsin: Frequently Asked Questions

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will continue to update the following questions, in partnership with our federal, state, and local partners.

Last updated 3/22/2022

How many facilities have tested positive for HPAI in Wisconsin?

DATCP [announced](#) a confirmed case of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in a commercial poultry flock in Jefferson County. Samples were tested by the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa. At this time, the only confirmed positive in Wisconsin is the affected premises in Jefferson County. For regular updates see DATCP's [HPAI in Wisconsin](#) page.

Has HPAI been detected in the wild bird population?

HPAI has been detected in the wild bird population and can carry the disease to new areas when migrating, potentially exposing domestic poultry to the virus. Additional avian influenza detections may occur as wild birds continue to migrate north. APHIS is conducting [wild bird surveillance](#), which serves as an early warning system for the introduction and distribution of avian influenza. To date, no wild birds in Wisconsin have tested positive.

Will I get HPAI?

According to the CDC, HPAI does not present an immediate public health concern and no human cases of avian influenza have been found in the US. For more information, see the Wisconsin Department of Health Services [Avian Influenza webpage](#).

Will HPAI enter the food system?

Birds and eggs from the flock will not enter the food system. HPAI does not pose a food safety risk; properly handling and cooking poultry and eggs to an internal temperature of 165°F kills the virus.

How is the disease outbreak being managed?

Depopulation efforts are ongoing at the Jefferson County poultry farm infected by HPAI. DATCP is working in coordination with federal, state, and local partners toward depopulation in order to limit the spread of HPAI. We do not have any indication at this time that there has been any spread outside of the affected premises.



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What happens to the birds after depopulation?

The birds will be composted; composting is the most efficient and environmentally responsible method for disposal of bird carcasses. Compost piles are constructed in a manner that includes a thick cover of compost carbon, such as wood chips, on top to eliminate the possibility of wild birds landing on the pile and carrying virus to new locations. Compost piles are inspected by regulatory staff for any evidence of leakage, odor, disruption, and evidence of pests.

DATCP has resources on composting, including resources from the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, and Cornell University, on the [Livestock Carcass Disposal webpage](#).

How has the current compost site been chosen?

This site is owned by the farm. DATCP has worked with federal and state partners to ensure the site meets compost location standards. Compost locations require a depth to groundwater in excess of 24 inches to the seasonal highwater tables, and soil depths in excess of 36 inches to bedrock.

Additionally, the compost site should be:

- 200 feet from a water supply well used for drinking;
- 200 feet from water bodies, including ponds, lakes, streams and rivers;
- 200 feet from a nearby residence (not owned by the premises);
- 50 feet from a drainage swale that leads to a water body; and
- 25 feet from a drainage swale that does not lead to a water body.

DATCP will continue to update information specific to the compost site as it becomes available. To stay updated, [sign up to receive email updates](#) about HPAI in Wisconsin.

Why was composting selected as the disposal method instead of another disposal method?

Composting is the safest and most effective way to handle large volumes of infected carcasses. The composting process will deactivate the virus. Although some materials will go to landfills, landfills can generally only accept a limited amount of carcass material.

What happens on a compost site?

Material will be laid out in windrows, which are long rows of composting material. Each windrow will include a mixture of carbon (mostly woody/mulch materials) under, around, and on top of the carcasses to create the appropriate environment for effective composting. Encasing and topping the carcasses with at least one foot of the carbon layer encourages the higher temperatures that speed decomposition, absorbs odors, and provides additional protection against



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water penetrating to the area of the windrow where the chickens have been placed. For more information, see DATCP's [Livestock Carcass Disposal webpage](#).

Why will depopulated birds be moved to this site instead of being composted on the farm?

Some have already been composted on-site within a newly constructed manure building, the only appropriate area on the farm property. Lands surrounding the farm do not have a suitable depth to groundwater for on-site composting.

Why was this site selected for composting depopulated birds?

The site is owned by the farm and has sufficient area and meets the locational criteria for a compost site.

How is HPAI being monitored in affected area?

The affected premises will not move poultry products, and birds on the property will be depopulated to prevent the spread of the disease. Birds from the flock will not enter the food system. Poultry premises within 10 kilometers of the farm are being monitored for the virus and are restricted from moving poultry and poultry products. Additionally, DATCP issued a special order banning poultry from any movement to, or participation in, shows, exhibitions, and swap meets held in Jefferson County. The special order will remain in effect through May 31, 2022.

How can I protect my poultry?

DATCP continues to encourage everyone in Wisconsin working with or around poultry to practice enhanced biosecurity measures to protect their flocks, including:

- Sanitizing equipment and clothing used around your flock.
- Protecting your flock from contact with wild birds.
- Restricting access to your property and keeping your birds away from other birds.

For more information on biosecurity, see the biosecurity section of the DATCP's [HPAI in Wisconsin page](#).

What are the clinical signs of HPAI?

- Sudden death, possibly without clinical signs
- Decrease in egg production or soft-shelled/misshapen eggs
- Nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Lack of energy and appetite



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- Difficulty breathing
- Stumbling, falling down
- Diarrhea

What should I do if I observe HPAI symptoms in my poultry?

To report increased mortality or signs of illness among domestic birds, contact DATCP at (608) 224-4872 (business hours) or (800) 943-0003 (after hours and weekends).

For more information:

DATCP has information and resources available on datcp.wi.gov. With any additional questions, please contact DATCPmediainquiries@wi.gov or (608) 224-5012.